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Tuber Diseases Of Potato

When digging potatoes, a number of diseases may be observed on the tubers for example, spots of corky tissue on the skin, called Common Scab; or black surface spots which look like pieces of soil, but remain sticking to the tuber when it is washed, this is the so called Black Scurf or Rhizoctonia. Again, there may be brown spots somewhat silvery, especially when moistened, the silver Scurf disease. These diseases do not affect the edible qualities of the potatoes; only when they are badly infected is a loss incurred, due to a deterioration in the saleable value.

Later, however, after the potatoes have been in storage for some months more or less rotting of the tubers take place, which in bad cases may result in 30% or 40% of the tubers becoming valueless. This rotting may be observed externally through its causing irregular sunken areas to appear, which are brown under the surface of the skin. This rot is due to Late Blight; this being a disease which first makes its appearance on the leaves as dead, water-soaked areas, occasionally killing the whole plant as well as infecting the tubers. Thus it is most important to spray your plants regularly during the growing season, particularly in warm and damp weather. Again, one may also find a dry rot with white pustules breaking through the surface; in this case the cause is a Fusarium Dry Rot, which is nearly always associated with a crack or bruise of the tuber.

Other diseases may be noticed when the potatoes are cut or peeled; for instance, a black discoloration extending from the skin inwards which is sometimes wet rotted. This is caused by a disease which also attacks the leaves.

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sufficient moisture to prevent potato drying, but not so much as to cause water to condense on the surface of the tubers. The amount of sunlight should be exposed to the tubers during the growing season, more particularly in the case of Late Blight, mentioned above, there is a direct relationship between the diseased plant and the later rotting of the potato in storage. In this article, however, we have aimed at emphasizing (1) the planting of healthy tubers, disinfected so as to kill externally adhering diseases and (2) the providing of conditions in storage which will reduce the loss from rotting to a minimum.